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President: Mr. Holkeri ..... (Finland)

The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

Agenda item 30

Implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s, including measures and recommendations agreed upon at its mid-term review

Report of the Secretary-General (A/55/350 and Add.1)

Mr. Kobayashi (Japan): My Government welcomes the report on the mid-term review of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF), and would like to thank the Office of the Special Coordinator for Africa and the Least Developed Countries (OSCAL) for preparing this excellent report, as well as the one on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa, which we discussed last week in the same context.

In sub-Saharan Africa, per capita income today is lower than it was in 1970 in real terms. Of the 44 least developed countries, 33 are in Africa. Almost half of the world's refugees and internally displaced persons are in Africa. Indeed, Africa is the only region where conflicts are increasing. There were more than 34 million people living with HIV/AIDS in the world as of the end of 1999, of which 24 million were in sub-Saharan Africa. This is a reality that we must face.

Mr. Dangue Réwaka (Gabon), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Many important points are covered in the report. On this occasion, I would like to focus on the issues of good governance, trade and foreign direct investment, information and communication technology, regional integration and HIV/AIDS.

My Government would like to stress how important it is for African countries to summon the political will to promote good governance by ensuring human rights and the rule of law, and by strengthening transparent and accountable public administration and the capacity to maintain it.

The re-emergence of armed conflicts in some regions of Africa and the negative impact of these conflicts on national and international efforts to promote economic and social development are alarming. Rapid population growth, unequal access to resources and opportunities and unequal participation in national decision-making are among the root causes of armed conflict. Good governance in African societies is central to addressing priority issues adequately.

African countries have not sufficiently shared in the opportunities for international trade and foreign direct investment offered by the world economy. African exports of goods have grown by an average of 2 per cent per year, compared to a world average of 7 per cent. The share of African exports decreased from 5.9 per cent of world exports in 1980 to 3 per cent in 1990 and 2.3 per cent in 1996.

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My Government believes that in the increasingly globalized world, trade and foreign direct investment present enormous opportunities for Africa. Aid is no substitute for trade. The multilateral trading system must therefore be responsive to the development aspirations of Africa. The international community should support the efforts of African countries to identify and upgrade African products with export potential.

Japan would like African countries to pay closer attention to the new opportunities that could be opened up by creating better conditions for foreign direct investment. Foreign direct investment could enable African countries, among other things, to tap into the large pool of expatriate expertise, which will help to fill the human-resource gaps in Africa.

My delegation believes that information and communication technology offer African countries an unprecedented chance to hasten their development. On the other hand, those countries in which most people live without access to information technology cannot fully participate in the new global society. Accordingly, the digital divide must be addressed before it is too late. Bilateral aid donors, as well as international organizations, should be encouraged to devise ways and means of giving the people of Africa greater access to information and communication technology.

Prior to the Okinawa G-8 Summit, Japan declared that it would prepare a comprehensive cooperation package for bridging the digital divide with a view to providing a total of $15 billion over the next five years. In implementing this package, Japan will collaborate with the United Nations system, including the United Nations Development Programme, the World Bank, the International Telecommunications Union and other relevant international organizations.

African countries and their development partners should recognize the importance of regional cooperation for liberalizing trade; developing physical infrastructure and institutions, including regional capital markets and research institutions; tackling HIV/AIDS; and preventing, managing and resolving conflicts. More specifically, in an increasingly integrated world, subregional and regional integration provide higher visibility to global investors, promote cross-border trade and investment, and reduce production and marketing costs.

Due to their proximity to the field, regional and subregional organizations may have a comparative advantage over global organizations in terms of their better understanding of the issues and their context, as well as in their greater ability to fine-tune measures and mechanisms. Thus, they are preferred channels for the design and implementation of measures for conflict prevention, management and resolution. This is the reason why external support is so important for building and strengthening the capacity of regional and subregional institutions and for further implementing the programmes of African subregional economic groups.

HIV/AIDS is not merely a health issue; it also impedes the development of developing countries. Governments and the United Nations system should actively promote the incorporation of a broad-based approach to the HIV/AIDS epidemic in all policies and programmes relating to development. Fighting HIV/AIDS should be a central part of the development programmes of developing countries, particularly in the efforts for poverty reduction.

On the occasion of the G-8 Okinawa Summit, the Government of Japan launched the Okinawa Infectious Diseases Initiative, under which Japan will target a total of $3 billion to be allocated over the next five years to enhance assistance for measures to combat HIV/AIDS and other infectious and parasitic diseases. As a follow-up to the G-8 Okinawa Summit, the Government of Japan is now preparing a conference for December in Okinawa, the aim of which is to actualize the commitment made by G-8 leaders in order to establish a new partnership to fight the major infectious diseases — namely, HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria. It is sincerely hoped that that conference will contribute to our efforts against HIV/AIDS. Also, Japan, along with the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, co-hosted in Tokyo earlier this month the second seminar on the development of health and medical services for Africa, as a part of the follow-up of the Second Tokyo International Conference on African Development. At the seminar, participants from African, Asian and Latin American countries discussed ways to enhance South-South cooperation against HIV/AIDS in Africa. They adopted the summary of the seminar, which is expected to make a contribution to the international conference in Okinawa. Also, Japan is currently preparing for a ministerial meeting on African development to be held

in the fiscal year 2001, as announced by Foreign Minister Yohei Kono in his speech to the General Assembly this September.

While certain progress has been made in implementing UN-NADAF, much remains to be done. In the final review, what has been achieved so far and what has not should be carefully analysed. Japan has been trying to realize the goals and objectives of UN-NADAF through the process of the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD). TICAD has much in common with UN-NADAF in that both stress poverty eradication through accelerated economic growth, the economic integration of Africa into the world economy, economic diversification and human resources development.

Finally, Japan remains committed to working together with African countries, as well as with the United Nations, in efforts to build a prosperous continent free from want and fear, by realizing the objectives of UN-NADAF.

Mrs. Viotti (Brazil): Brazil welcomes the Secretary-General's report on the implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF). First of all, I wish to highlight the need to establish follow-up mechanisms and frameworks to ensure the consistency of ongoing initiatives for the promotion of peace and sustainable development in Africa.

Brazil shares the view that effective responses to Africa's problems can be achieved only through coordinated efforts of the international community and the mobilization of political will, both in Africa and beyond its borders. As we know, in response to the development challenges faced by the African continent, in December 1991 the General Assembly adopted the New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s as a framework of consensus and partnership between Africa and the international community. We regret, however, that progress has been limited in the implementation of the New Agenda. Foreign direct investment in Africa remains minimal and concentrated in a few areas, while official development assistance continues to decline. Economic insecurity and inadequate financial support continue to aggravate the situation of the majority of African countries. Structural adjustment, which has led to the recovery of some macroeconomic indicators, has not been sufficient to set African countries on the road to sustainable development. As the Secretary-General correctly pointed out in his report, while there has been some progress in resolving the debt crisis, this has been less visible in low-income countries where external debt service claims nearly one fifth of average savings.

New problems have affected the continent, such as that of the HIV/AIDS pandemic. In sum, the mobilization of resources to promote peace, stability and sustainable development in Africa requires a much higher degree of international financial cooperation and greater commitment by the international community.

The international community plays a crucial role in addressing the challenges faced by African countries in their development process, as well as in translating commitments into concrete actions. The Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Debt Initiative, for instance, should be strengthened and broadened so as to benefit more countries. Brazil is making very important efforts to contribute to the HIPC process. So far, our costs related to bilateral debt relief to the countries that have already qualified for assistance have amounted to more than $300 million. Brazil also participates in the funding of the International Monetary Fund's additional HIPC costs.

We urge Member States to respond creatively to the positive developments in Africa and to react to the less positive ones through a constructive and attentive dialogue. The objective of such a dialogue should not be to impose conclusions unilaterally arrived at, but to assist Africans, when such assistance is required, to come up with appropriate solutions and make them work. Technical assistance, for instance, cannot be supply-oriented, but must be targeted at the specific needs of the recipient countries and should make full use of their resources and potentialities. On the other hand, in order to make a difference for Africa in areas such as trade, finance, technical cooperation and capacity-building, the United Nations must continue to implement specific assistance initiatives and forge a closer relationship at all levels with relevant regional organizations and the Bretton Woods institutions.

The achievement of priority development objectives, however, goes far beyond institutional arrangements in the United Nations system and depends ultimately on the political will of Member States to strengthen their cooperation with Africa.

I wish to stress the importance of South-South cooperation to the development of Africa. The

strengthening of technical cooperation among developing countries can contribute significantly to the mobilization of resources and to the promotion of sustainable development in Africa. Despite its limited resources, Brazil has a long-standing record of cooperation with Africa and has been deploying efforts, through the Brazilian Cooperation Agency and other national institutions, to share with Africa its own experience in struggling for development.

A large portion of Brazilian technical cooperation projects with developing countries are channeled to African countries in a number of strategic areas, such as capacity-building and training of experts, health, basic education programmes, management of agricultural policies, tropical agriculture, electric power generation and monitoring and exploration of mineral resources.

In the field of the fight against HIV/AIDS, for example, since 1997 Brazil has carried out cooperation programmes with Portuguese-speaking countries in the areas of the management of preventive programmes and the establishment of epidemiological monitoring systems. This cooperation, which is based on our own national experience, is now being extended to other countries in Africa. Last year, experts of the Brazilian Ministry of Health visited Kenya, Zimbabwe, South Africa, Namibia and Botswana in order to identify cooperation projects.

The dialogue between subregional integration processes is another example of cooperation. Enhancing external trade with other partners, including developing countries, has been one of the main objectives of the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR). We attach great importance to furthering a dialogue between MERCOSUR and the integration processes in Africa. We have already taken initial steps in this direction with the Southern African Development Community.

Another modality of cooperation to be explored might encompass trilateral schemes involving an African country, Brazil and a third country or international organization. For example, initiatives in the field of agriculture and health might be taken with the cooperation of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the World Health Organization or the United Nations Children's Fund. At the international level, Brazil and African countries have been working together in such organizations as the International Coffee Organization, the International Cocoa Organization and the Common Fund for Commodities.

As far as conflict resolution is concerned, Brazil continues to provide political and material support to Africa, as illustrated by its participation in the United Nations peacekeeping operations in Angola and Mozambique and its contribution to the negotiation of a ceasefire in Guinea-Bissau.

Regarding the need for a coordinated approach to humanitarian assistance, we believe that appropriate mechanisms for efficient coordination within the United Nations system should be developed, taking into account that several United Nations organs are responsible for addressing humanitarian problems.

A peaceful, stable and prosperous Africa is a crucial element of world stability. It is true that, in recent years, some unfortunate events have led us to fear that Africa was bound to fail as a continent of peace and prosperity, a sentiment that has been called "Afro-pessimism". Nevertheless, Africa need not be defined as a continent immersed in conflict. As is widely recognized, there are many parts of Africa where peace and economic growth are taking root. Through the adoption of the United Nations Millennium Declaration, all Member States acknowledged the special needs of Africa and pledged to assist Africans in their struggle for lasting peace, poverty eradication and sustainable development. The effective implementation of such commitments calls for a strategic partnership between Africa and the international community.

Brazil remains determined to work for the economic development of African countries and hopes that the international community will strengthen its assistance to the region and thereby contribute to the full realization of the fundamental rights of Africans.

Mr. Kumalo (South Africa): It is good to see you in the chair today, Sir. It makes me want to practice my French, but I will not.

We meet today to evaluate the implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF). Before us are two very useful reports by the Secretary-General, aimed at assisting us in this review. My delegation wishes to thank the Secretary-General for a very thorough report and addendum providing a most useful

overview of the implementation of the recommendations of the mid-term review of this important Agenda. The reports also contain interesting proposals for further implementation, which need serious consideration.

The addendum on resource flows to Africa makes rather sad reading, as it highlights the deteriorating situation in Africa in the recent past. The decrease in domestic savings rates; the continuing flight of capital from the continent, which has reached a staggering estimated total of $350 billion; the drop of more than 50 per cent in official development assistance flows into the continent in the six-year period from 1992 to 1998; the persistently low and decreasing foreign direct investment flows into Africa; the deterioration in terms of trade for the continent; the escalating debt burden; and the decline of the per capita income from $749 in 1980 to $688 in 1998, a decline of about 9 per cent — all this paints a very bleak picture of the problems facing our continent.

All these signs seem to suggest that, once we come to the final review of the UN-NADAF in 2002, we will be faced with an even greater challenge than we had at the beginning of the Agenda. We risk the prospect of a tragic confirmation that Africa's economic and financial situation has worsened in the decade that UN-NADAF has been in place.

Despite these negative and depressing statistics, my delegation believes that we Africans are at a turning point and that the future of Africa looks much brighter. In this regard, I wish to echo the Secretary-General, who in his report on this item observes that

> "Africa has an important opportunity for a new beginning in the new millennium. Since independence, never have the momentum and conditions for change been better." (*A/55/350/Add.1, para. 48*)

I share this optimism for a number of reasons. We Africans have started assuming responsibility for finding solutions to our own problems. We are ready to address the challenges we face. There is a growing understanding of the particular nature of Africa's problems and challenges. The wide range of bilateral and multilateral initiatives bears testimony to the active interest in addressing the particular needs of our continent. Already, Africa is grappling with its own proposals towards the establishment of a global partnership for the development of the continent. These proposals, by Africans for Africans, will, hopefully, be launched in the not-too-distant future.

Africans are in the process of defining the broad priorities for our continent. We choose to call this process the African renaissance. First, we have concluded that the African renaissance means the establishment of democratic political systems which will ensure the accomplishment of the goal that the people must govern.

Second, the renaissance will make certain that these systems take into account African specifics so that, while being truly democratic and protecting human rights, they are nevertheless designed in ways which really ensure that political and peaceful means can be used to address the competing interests of different social groups in each country.

Third, the renaissance will establish institutions and procedures that will enable the continent to deal collectively with questions of democracy, peace and stability.

Fourth, it will help to achieve sustainable development that results in the continuous improvement of the standard of living and the quality of life of the masses of people.

Fifth, it will qualitatively change Africa's place in the global economy so that it is free of the yoke of the international debt burden and is no longer a mere supplier of raw materials and an importer of manufactured goods.

Sixth, it will ensure the full emancipation of the women of Africa.

Seventh, it will help in successfully confronting the scourge of infectious diseases such as HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria.

Lastly, the renaissance is about protecting the environment of our continent and ensuring the sustainable use of our natural resources.

Not surprisingly, these priorities are all included in the agenda of UN-NADAF.

The final review of UN-NADAF and the consideration of a possible successor arrangement would have to address a number of challenges. The first would be to make a thorough evaluation of all the initiatives so far. These would not only be within the United Nations system, but would include other

bilateral, multilateral and regional initiatives related to Africa. This will, of course, also include initiatives emanating from our continent.

Another challenge will be to consider how this review process can be linked to the work of the Open-ended Ad Hoc Working Group on the Causes of Conflict and the Promotion of Durable Peace and Sustainable Development in Africa. The high-level segment of the substantive session of the Economic and Social Council in 2001 must also feed into the review process.

Furthermore, consideration will have to be given to ways in which the Africa-specific elements of the major United Nations conferences can be brought together with the other initiatives for and by Africa. As our heads of State or Government said during the Millennium Summit held here in New York a few weeks ago, the problems of the new millennium require comprehensive solutions. And we from Africa know this truth better than many.

As hopeful as we are about the future of our continent, we also recognize that there can be no sustainable development without peace and security. The immediate reminder for us is the senseless war raging in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. This war consumes nine other countries, many of them our neighbours. We watch helplessly as we see very precious resources, both human and material, being wasted in this war.

The countries of southern Africa, under the leadership of President Chiluba of Zambia, came together more than a year ago to agree on a peace plan known as the Lusaka Agreement, which we believed would help bring this war to an end. Sixteen months later, we are still waiting for the Security Council to play its mandated role for restoring peace and security in the region.

This is one reason why for us in Africa the Brahimi report is fundamental and very important in laying the foundation for peace in Africa. If we lose the Brahimi report to the disagreements that we have, which my delegation believes can be overcome, the biggest losers will be those of us in Africa. Already we have lost much, and we cannot afford to lose even more.

One of the areas we will have to review when we next discuss UN-NADAF will be the contribution of regional solutions to the problems we face in Africa. We in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) have seen the fruits of our regional integration and cooperation. SADC has over the years designed a number of spatial development projects that bring together the efforts of more than one country in our region. For example, South Africa and Mozambique have combined to provide the physical transport, communication and power infrastructure as the foundation for the development of services and manufacturing. This is what is known as the Maputo Corridor. The joint efforts by our two countries vastly improved the costing structure and competitiveness, thereby attracting significant foreign direct investment to the area.

Another example is the Lebombo corridor, which brings together three countries, Swaziland, Mozambique and South Africa, working together to develop environmentally friendly projects, including those for attracting eco-tourism. Several neighbouring countries, including Zimbabwe, Namibia, Botswana and Mozambique, joined to built a major road to transport goods to places between the Atlantic Ocean and the Indian Ocean. More projects are in the pipeline. Besides the normal economic advantages, these projects have deepened democracy and good-neighbourliness while making development in our region more sustainable.

We in Africa are going through a difficult but very promising period, as the Secretary-General so correctly pointed out in his report. We need to strengthen the partnership between the countries of the North and the countries of the South, especially those of us in Africa. The problems we face cannot be addressed by Africans only. The HIV/AIDS pandemic, malaria and other diseases require a global rather than a continental solution. While we may be ready to do as much as we can, we hope those countries that have more to give, especially our northern partners, will find it in their hearts and their budgets to assist.

At the next review of UN-NADAF we hope the Secretary-General will be able to report that there has been a change in the plight of Africa. With confidence, our leaders meeting at the Organization of African Unity summit in Algeria in 1999 declared this the African century. We believe they must have known something, and UN-NADAF may bear this out next time.

Mr. Kafando (Burkina Faso) (*spoke in French*): The item on the implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s is of the utmost importance in the opinion of my delegation. This is why we would like to share our views in this debate.

The prime objective of the United Nations New Agenda was to accelerate the transformation, integration, diversification and economic growth of African countries, to make them less vulnerable to outside forces, to enhance their autonomy and vigour and to ensure a lasting development process.

From this standpoint, at the 1996 mid-term review of the implementation of the New Agenda, the General Assembly noted the progress that had been made by a number of African countries in the area of economic reforms, the adjustment process, democratization and the strengthening of civil society. However, despite all these efforts, Africa is still grappling with serious socio-economic problems, which are aggravated by a set of endogenous and exogenous factors such as globalization, investments, indebtedness and so forth.

In fact, globalization, while presenting clear advantages for the world economy and particularly for industrialized countries, causes new problems and involves constraints for the African countries, which find themselves further pushed to the sidelines.

Export receipts and the survival of the majority of African countries continue to depend on certain basic commodities, whose prices as a whole have declined ever since 1998, thereby causing a decline in internal savings and investment. Despite the efforts deployed by a large number of countries to improve conditions for private investment, foreign direct investment continues to contribute very little to our economies.

Moreover, in addition to the drastic decline in official development assistance, African countries' huge debt remains a source of great concern, since debt servicing consumes a large part of our income, to the detriment of national investment.

Other facts, such as the HIV/AIDS pandemic, malaria and armed conflicts, not only cause tremendous human suffering, but also impede Africa's socio-economic development, since the most vulnerable sectors of our population are mainly those in the productive sectors.

In the face of all these challenges, a number of initiatives have been launched, but unfortunately they have been weakened by the fact that many of the commitments made by the international community under the New Agenda have not been honoured.

We appeal to the international community to adopt and implement new measures, especially to help in the struggle against poverty and to stimulate growth.

Implementation of these new measures to ensure lasting development requires first a strategy having as its backbone macroeconomic stability, a secure environment to encourage investment, support for export activities, adequate investment in human development sectors such as health and education, and good governance, as well as improvement of basic infrastructure.

The key to development and the main objective of any development policy in Africa is the struggle against poverty. We know that poverty arises from the interaction between population, environment and development.

The tragedy of Africa is, first, that population growth is far greater than growth in food production per capita and, secondly, that the rapid deterioration of the environment seriously harms agricultural output. It is therefore important urgently to tackle these problems and to incorporate population, environmental and agricultural development issues in development planning and anti-poverty policies.

After the follow-up in Geneva in June to the World Summit for Social Development, the Millennium Summit condemned the various constraints on developing countries, particularly the African countries, since, according to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), 80 per cent of countries with weak human resources development are in Africa and four out of ten Africans live in absolute poverty.

Although African countries, those most concerned, will have to adopt adequate and urgent measures to get out of this impasse, particularly by ensuring good governance, it is also essential that donors and lenders agree, without too many conditions, to help them mobilize the resources needed to finance their development. All eyes are therefore on the high-level international and intergovernmental meeting on financing for development, to be held in 2001.

We repeat that advancing the cause of Africa means advancing the cause of the entire world, since in our globalized, interdependent world it is only by helping the poorest to overcome their underdevelopment that the better off can guarantee their own survival.

Mr. Mesdoua (Algeria) *(spoke in French)*: This third debate on Africa in the space of just 10 days is of particular importance, because it falls within the framework of the preliminary dialogue on preparation for the final review and evaluation of implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s, which will take place in 2002. Although it would have been desirable to space out these debates a little, each has its own merit relating to different, but nevertheless complementary, aspects of the situation of the continent which are taken up each time.

At the beginning of the 1990s the New Agenda embodied the concern of the Organization and the international community as a whole to support Africa's development efforts. The New Agenda, which is a true plan of action, has become a political contract containing responsibilities and commitments agreed by the African States, on the one hand, and their development partners, on the other, concerning specific actions.

During the mid-term review in 1996 it emerged clearly that, despite some progress in some areas, on the whole the same conditions which had justified the launching of the New Agenda at the beginning of the decade remained in place. Moreover, it was widely recognized that for their part, despite the innumerable difficulties and the objective limits on their resources, the African States had made serious efforts to implement the agreed actions and had thereby honoured a good part of their responsibilities. That being so, and given the difficult prospects for the continent, particular measures and recommendations were proposed by common agreement in order to continue and accelerate the New Agenda's application. Thus, it is with great interest that Africa looks forward to the final review in 2002.

In this framework, the progress report submitted to us by the Secretary-General on implementation, including measures and recommendations agreed at the mid-term review in 1996, and the addendum are two documents full of information, analyses and proposals on actions taken and/or initiated both by the African States themselves and by the international community, in particular the United Nations system, and are therefore a source of an enormous amount of information about a fundamental dimension of African development — the mobilization of financial resources. My delegation appreciates the high quality of these two documents.

The General Assembly resolutions and the agreed conclusions of the Economic and Social Council contain terms of reference which can guide the review process. Algeria believes that the independent review of the implementation of the New Agenda should have the aim of drawing up a balance sheet. It would be useful in this connection if the team responsible for the study included representatives of African countries and their development partners, both in the north and in the south. The United Nations system, including the Economic Commission for Africa and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, as well as the Organization of African Unity (OAU), should also be represented on this team. Civil society could also make a useful contribution to the review.

Clearly, the independent review and the final examination of the implementation of UN-NADAF would remain incomplete if they were not part of an ongoing approach in the international community's support for African development. Therefore, the discussion and negotiations to take place between now and 2002 should aim at developing another framework or programme of cooperation to succeed UN-NADAF.

Similarly, it would be useful if they took into account the results of the debate that the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), held during the coordination segment of its substantive session in 1999, which was devoted to the implementation and coordinated follow-up of African development initiatives.

At this stage we think it would be useful to stress that consideration of the arrangements for a successor to UN-NADAF should be guided by the following elements.

The first is an effective commitment on the part of the international community in a spirit of real partnership with Africa and respect for African priorities as defined by Africans in their national and regional development strategies. The second element is strengthening Africans' sense of ownership of the

cooperation activity proposed to them. Another element is ongoing support for African capacities at the national, subregional and regional levels in coordinating programmes of cooperation and development assistance.

Other elements include adaptation of the cooperation with the continent so that it can take on the new priorities resulting from globalization; greater involvement of the Organization of African Unity and greater attention to the main areas of work established by that organization, especially in the areas of integration, education, health and others; the need for a serious effort to improve coordination and harmonization of the many international bilateral and multilateral initiatives for Africa; the need for adequate identification of the continent's need; and the need for specific benchmarks in the form of targeted goals or indicators and time limits for implementation. The Algerian delegation believes these principles should be considered in evaluating a successor to UN-NADAF.

Many international events of considerable importance for Africa are expected before the final review of UN-NADAF in 2002. The international conference on financing for development, the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries and the special session of the General Assembly on HIV/AIDS should all bear in mind the specific dimensions of the African situation in order to firmly consolidate a consensus on a special effort for the continent.

Furthermore, the high-level ECOSOC segment next year, which is to be devoted to the United Nations role in support of efforts for the sustainable development of Africa, will no doubt enrich the debate and take place within the context of developing a new framework of cooperation for the Organization to replace UN-NADAF. Furthermore, Algeria can only welcome the fact that African development continues to represent a priority for our Organization.

At the Millennium Summit, world leaders unanimously recognized Africa's special needs. Algeria dares hope, in this context, that the commitments made, especially in terms of special measures to be taken to meet challenges such as eliminating poverty and achieving sustainable development in Africa, will soon take concrete form.

In this connection, the final review of UN-NADAF in 2002 offers an opportunity of choice for the rest of the world to reflect on a real world programme of support for Africa along the lines of the Marshall Plan for a Europe that had emerged bled white at the end of the Second World War. Would it not be as fair for Africa also to have its chance?

Therefore, Algeria calls for international mobilization for a world programme on African development, in which the United Nations would play a central role. Such a programme could be called a "programme" or a "world partnership for African development" that would serve as the global framework for all existing initiatives.

In recent years, many bilateral and multilateral initiatives have been taken by Africa's development partners in the North and the South. Africa can only welcome this, while hoping that these initiatives will be further strengthened and will promote a spirit of world solidarity and effective support for our continent's efforts.

Mr. Doutriaux (France) (*spoke in French*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The Central and East European countries associated with the European Union — Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia — and the other associated countries Cyprus, Malta and Turkey, align themselves with this statement.

As the main donor of funds and principal trading partner of the African continent, the European Union attaches special importance to the success of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF). The African continent, in particular sub-Saharan Africa which includes 33 of the 48 countries officially designated as least developed countries, is the priority region for European Union cooperation. The European Union endeavours in all international meetings to fully consider the particular needs of Africa. It does this at the United Nations, especially during General Assembly special sessions, as well as in international financial institutions.

This is one of the key policy objectives of the European Union, which was clearly stated at the Africa-Europe summit held in Cairo this year. The European Union welcomes the success of that conference and the adoption of a declaration and a plan of action which set guidelines for its relations with Africa. The hosting by the European Union in Brussels of the Third United Nations Conference on the Least

Developed Countries next year is another example of Europe's commitment to development, particularly in Africa.

The report submitted by the Secretariat highlights the varying results achieved in the implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa. On the one hand, it shows what we have achieved in terms of resumed economic growth, the ongoing re-establishment of the major macroeconomic balances, efforts to establish sound economic policies and structural reforms and real progress on the democratization front.

On the other hand, however, the report shows the enormous challenge that remains to be met, with 51 per cent of the sub-Saharan African population living in absolute poverty, insufficient agricultural and food production, lack of progress in diversifying economies, insufficient integration into the world economy and, finally, the persistently weak social indicators threatened by the rapid spread of AIDS. It is crucial that the African countries take the measures necessary to fight this scourge; have been positive results in this regard, as the examples of Senegal and Uganda have demonstrated.

The international community must support their efforts, including by mobilizing the additional resources that are required. The European Union welcomes the fact that the fight against AIDS has become a top priority for United Nations agencies. It will continue to support action in that area, in particular through the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS. It will also continue its efforts to strengthen health systems, including the fight against other infectious diseases such as tuberculosis and malaria.

The European Union continues strongly to favour the formulation of an integrated United Nations approach to African development which also takes account of the political, economic and social dimensions of conflict prevention and conflict resolution. The European Union would point out that 20 of the 38 poorest countries in the world are still embroiled in or are only just emerging from conflict. The coming of peace is not in itself enough to eradicate poverty. But there can be no real progress in the fight against poverty without sustainable peace.

In that connection, the European Union is greatly concerned at the proliferation or recurrence of conflict in West Africa, in the Great Lakes region and in southern Africa. Not only do such conflicts, inter alia through the concomitant illegal exploitation of natural wealth, deflect the financial resources of African countries and of the chief contributors from development to the peacekeeping operations budget, but they also threaten to do permanent damage to efforts at regional integration, and ultimately to destabilize entire subregions, undermining the development efforts of all the surrounding States. The European Union therefore supports United Nations endeavours in the sphere of conflict prevention and conflict resolution, whether in the form of support for regional peace and security efforts, mediation attempts or a better understanding of the economic and commercial aspects of particular African crises.

The report submitted by the Secretariat pinpoints the difficulties faced by the African continent in mobilizing financial resources and in using them effectively for its development. The report also highlights the extent of the African continent's needs. While recognizing the shortage of domestic resources which can be mobilized in the countries concerned, the European Union would again stress the importance of developing countries themselves creating an environment that is favourable to development by encouraging the rule of law, human rights and good governance, inter alia through the setting up of reliable and effective systems of taxation. It goes without saying that the resources mobilized in that way must be channelled into satisfying the basic social needs of the people, especially the most vulnerable groups, without ethnic, religious or gender discrimination. The creation of a favourable environment is moreover a means for African countries to assume responsibility for the measures decided upon to help them; that is an essential condition for the success of such measures.

The European Union acknowledges the vital role of funds and programmes and of the World Bank and the regional development banks in reducing poverty. It calls for concessional funds to be targeted at the poorest countries, which have only limited access to financial markets, and most of which are in Africa, so that the requisite basic infrastructures can be developed there. It considers that policies to combat poverty and inequality must be at the centre of economic reforms. They must be more than just safety nets to cushion the impact of adjustment policies.

Official development assistance (ODA) must complement the mobilization of national resources and must play an essential role of catalyst for the channelling of private funds and direct international funding to developing countries. It is vital that the flow of foreign direct investment to Africa be increased. The Secretariat report highlights the fact that in 1999 Africa attracted a mere 4.5 per cent of total foreign direct investment in developing countries.

On the debt issue, the European Union expressed its position during the debate on that item in the Second Committee. The Union confirmed in particular that it considers the enhanced Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Debt Initiative to be a key element in fighting poverty and achieving the objective of the sustainable development of developing countries. It fully supports that Initiative. The European Union calls on eligible countries to take the requisite political and economic measures to join the process. It also urges creditor countries which have not yet done so to contribute to the funding of the enlarged HIPC Initiative so that the burden can be shared equitably. The European Union will see to it that the financial contribution to the Initiative is not to the detriment of other ODA channels.

To conclude on the issue of financing, the European Union confirms that it attaches great importance to the High-level International Intergovernmental Event on Financing for Development, to be held in 2001. It must provide an opportunity to campaign for better mobilization of national and international resources for development, and to help achieve greater consistency in policies.

Access by African countries to the markets of the developed countries is an important aspect of their economic development. Here, the European Union regards Africa's integration into the world economy as particularly important. The Union has opened its market wide to products from African countries and intends to go even further in that direction. The Union was the driving force behind a World Trade Organization initiative to guarantee duty-free and quota-free access for exports from least developed countries. The European Union is prepared to work for further progress in eliminating customs duties and quotas, a major effort which we hope might be followed by other countries. The Union extends a general invitation to the other industrialized nations to follow its lead in opening up trade to manufactured products from African countries.

Regional integration too could be an effective factor for the economic development of Africa, considering that many African countries have, as the report notes, internal markets of limited scale. The European Union supports the promotion of regional integration, which could also be an instrument for coordinating and harmonizing a broad range of sectoral policies, and which is also an indispensable means of combating natural disasters. The European Union will continue actively to support the various regional integration initiatives and United Nations programmes helping to set up unified structures within the continent.

In conclusion, I should like to reiterate the fundamental importance for the European Union of a comprehensive and integrated approach to African development which would take account both of political and economic aspects and of the social and environmental dimensions of sustainable human development. That is the approach of the recent Cotonou agreement between the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) States and the European Union, which focuses on the objective of reducing poverty in a way consistent with the objectives of sustainable development and the gradual integration of the ACP countries into the world economy.

Such a global and integrated approach calls for coordination based on existing processes such as the Comprehensive Development Framework, the poverty reduction strategy paper and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework.

Mr. Malhotra (India): I compliment the Secretary-General on the comprehensive nature and the thought-provoking quality of the report (A/55/350 and A/55/350/Add.1) before us. We have read those documents with great interest and believe that the thorough examination and implementation of the recommendations contained therein would certainly contribute to the realization of the resolve of our heads of State or Government at the Millennium Summit to meet the special needs of Africa.

During discussions on this agenda item at the fifty-third session, my delegation pointed out that the best of intentions and goodwill have to be matched by the provision of adequate resources that are not only sufficient for the implementation of the United Nations

New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF) but that will lead to a growth rate in gross domestic product of at least 8 per cent per annum, which is judged to be the minimum required for an effective fight against poverty in the African continent. We then fully concurred with the views of the Secretary-General, expressed in his progress report (A/53/390), that one of the critical issues hindering the implementation of the New Agenda related to impediments encountered in increasing financial flows to the countries of Africa. We note from paragraph 165 of the present report (A/55/350) that effective mobilization of financial resources, despite often-expressed political resolve, remains a critical development challenge for the African region. Given the critical importance of this issue, the Secretary-General has presented to us an addendum concentrating exclusively on the mobilization of additional resources for African development.

The picture, as outlined in the addendum, is bleak: inflows have been largely offset by outflows; official development assistance (ODA) to Africa has been falling by about 20 per cent in real terms since the advent of the New Agenda for the Development of Africa; and, most importantly, the perceived integration of African countries into the globalized market place appears to be becoming a curse, with Africa's loss of market share in its exports over the period 1970-1997 representing a staggering annual income loss of $68 billion — almost 20 per cent of its gross domestic product.

The report correctly points out that, in comparison with those of the 1980s, recent trends indicate a worsening of aggregate resource flows to Africa. It furthermore makes the absolutely valid and crucial point that ODA and other external resource inflows are falling precisely when the need is greatest — when the African countries have undertaken valiant economic reforms and achieved considerable progress with regard to the promotion of the private sector, the intensification of democratization processes, the strengthening of civil society institutions and in other areas. It is clear that productivity per dollar of ODA in Africa has increased considerably through these efforts made by African countries, but it is saddening that the increase in efficiency in the utilization of external assistance should be matched not by enhanced commitments, but by reduced inflows.

Africa is perhaps the only region in the world where per capita income in 1998 was lower than it was 1980 — $688, as compared with $749; and it is the only region where poverty is projected to increase in the next decade. A sustainable reduction in poverty can be ensured only through the promotion of sustained and broad-based income growth. It has been estimated that to achieve the required growth rates, investment rates of at least 30 per cent to 40 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) per annum would be required for sub-Saharan African countries. Given the average savings rate of 13 per cent during the 1990s — or even the current domestic savings rate of about 18 per cent — they face a significant resource gap of at least 22 per cent to 27 per cent per annum. This gap must be filled by external financial resources.

We noted from the report that the average national savings rate of 15.8 per cent for the period 1996-1998 was small in comparison with Africa's historical peak performance of 28.4 per cent, in the 1980s. But, as the report itself points out, and as my delegation said two years ago, there can hardly be any savings at subsistence levels without squeezing consumption. Furthermore, even in the face of difficulties, the savings rate is depleted by capital flight, which remains pervasive and severe, and by the net transfer of resources abroad in the form of net factor income less public grants.

These structural impediments could have been overcome had the international community been responsive to the needs of Africa. But, as the Secretary-General states in document A/55/350/Add.1, in terms of quantity, reliability and effectiveness, external finance has been disappointing. The inflow of capital to African countries has steadily declined from $28.2 billion in 1995 to $20.8 billion in 1996 and to $17.1 billion in 1998 — a fall of over a third in three years. The fall in ODA from $19.7 billion in 1992 to $9.7 billion in 1998 — a reduction of more than one half in six years — is even more disturbing. The fall has been dramatic, especially when we consider the promises that were made and the expectations generated when we estimated that ODA should increase by 4 per cent per annum in real terms in the 1990s. Instead of an increase, there has been a 24 per cent decline in real terms — an average annual decline during the past 10 years of 2.4 per cent per annum.

The reason for this decline is implicit in paragraph 25 of the report in document

A/55/350/Add.1. As the Secretary-General states in that paragraph, "In reality, development is but one of the multiple objectives served by aid."

The end of the cold war did not produce a peace dividend simply because many African countries and, indeed, other developing countries, lost their strategic appeal. Another problem is that foreign technical assistance absorbs over 25 per cent of ODA. The more than 100,000 foreign experts in Africa cost about $4 billion per annum and represent a major leakage of aid resources. The multiplicity of donors, with their differing requirements, also weakens African capacities, as the new parallel aid economy attracts the more skilled civil servants with higher salaries while the remaining civil servants spend more than 50 per cent of their time dealing with a myriad of donors. Much of the aid delivery bypasses national budget processes and weakens the accountability of democratically elected leaders to their own people.

Some of the suggestions put forward by the Secretary-General deserve our immediate and urgent consideration. Two of them, which could have a critical influence, are the complete and full untying of aid and ensuring that technical assistance is used for capacity-building — taking our cue from the aid recipient, which must be in the driver's seat. Another courageous proposal of the Secretary-General, which deserves to be fully supported, is the need to acknowledge that the current system, based on altruism, has not worked well, and that the time has therefore come to institutionalize aid commitments as mandatory obligations with an institutional mechanism to collect such resources from developed countries and transfer them to needy countries.

The Secretary-General has estimated that terms-of-trade losses typically offset 70 per cent of ODA to Africa, and exceed all inflows to Africa — ODA, foreign direct investment, private lending and portfolio flows. The international community must act in concert to ensure that market access to products and manufactured goods from Africa is available as an integrated element of its development process. Rising levels of protectionism in developed country markets, tariff escalations and tariff peaks, protectionism, the frequent and unjustified use of anti-dumping duties and countervailing measures and non-tariff barriers to African exports — and, indeed, to exports from other developing countries — must be effectively removed.

The issue of external debt and the problem of debt overhang deserve urgent consideration. Many African countries have become trapped in a debt cycle whereby new aid is given to service existing debt stock. While such aid shows up as "new resources", that is a mere accounting adjustment, and no new dollars reach the supposed recipient. Additional resources are required — apart from ODA — to fully finance the envisaged debt cancellation.

Another important issue is that of the return of capital squirrelled away from these countries. Capital flight remains pervasive and at the end of the 1990s was estimated at about $350 billion — about the size of Africa's external debt stock. The situation is complicated by the unwillingness of the foreign Governments in whose banks lies the preponderant portion of these massive amounts to make efforts to return this capital to those to whom it rightly belongs: the people of Africa. Africa urgently and desperately needs these funds, not only for development, but also to further its efforts to staunch corruption.

We are convinced that, if we can achieve the mobilization of the required financial resources, African countries will make even greater progress. We commend the people of Africa and their leaders for the significant gains outlined in the report of the Secretary-General, even though the external economic environment remained unfavourable to them. This is a predicament that we and other developing countries share and empathize with.

India has always attached the highest priority to its cooperation with Africa. Within our resource constraints, we are committed to contributing to capacity-building through expanded technical cooperation with the countries of Africa. More than 60 per cent of nearly 1,500 training slots every year in our best institutions, in diverse fields ranging from banking, foreign trade, hydrology and water resources, communications, electronics, satellite, agriculture, small and medium industry, software, renewable energy and the like, are reserved for nominees from African countries.

We have also implemented and initiated technical assistance and infrastructure-building projects in Africa under our cooperation programme, including upgrading of hospitals, establishment of rural health centres, establishment of demonstration farms to promote agricultural sufficiency, establishment of solar energy

lighting systems, manufacturing plants for poultry vaccines, entrepreneur development centres, mechanical training workshops, information technology training centres, and so on.

Cooperation between the private sectors of India and of African countries is also growing at a vibrant pace. Several joint ventures in manufacturing sectors have been established by Indian private-sector companies in Africa. In certain sectors such as railways, Indian industry is involved in a major way in the development of African transport infrastructure.

We propose to continue further in this direction, as we believe that Africa and India are bound by ties that reach way back into history, and that our partnership should embrace the future. We will endeavour to contribute, to the maximum extent possible within our capacities, to the efforts of African countries towards growth and self-reliance, particularly in the area of human resource development, since, in the true spirit of South-South solidarity, it is in their success that our progress also lies.

Mr. Babaa (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) *(spoke in Arabic)*: At the outset, I should like to express my delegation's deep appreciation to the Secretary-General and his staff for the progress report before us on the implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s.

Consideration of this item offers the international community the opportunity to increase its awareness of the development challenges facing the African continent and reflects the increasing attention devoted by the world to Africa's development and growth. It also reaffirms the commitment made by the Member States to support the efforts of the United Nations and its specialized agencies in the realization of that objective. Further, it represents yet another opportunity for Africa, in the framework of its determination to realize sustainable development, to shoulder its responsibilities and to rely on itself and on its peoples, as well as on the support of the international community.

We welcome the report of the Secretary-General and reaffirm our support for the recommendations therein. We call on the United Nations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and the international community in its entirety, to redouble their initiatives to support Africa's development efforts. We hope also that the United Nations will promote its cooperation with the Organization of African Unity, the African Development Bank and other specialized regional organizations, in addition to strengthening its partnership with African NGOs at the grass-roots level, which bear the responsibility for coping effectively with development challenges on a daily basis.

The report of the Secretary-General contains good news and bad news. On the one hand, the report indicates that some progress has been achieved in the implementation of the recommendations of the mid-term review since the last progress report was submitted to the fifty-third session of the General Assembly, particularly in the field of economic reform, the development of the private sector, the strengthening of civil society and the promotion of economic cooperation and integration. Nevertheless, there is still a need to redouble efforts in order to achieve progress in this regard.

On the other hand, prospects are still gloomy in Africa due to the intensification of the debt crisis, the spread of HIV/AIDS and the widespread persistence of abject poverty. At the same time, a sharp decrease has been noted in financial resources and official development assistance and in growth rates, coupled with a considerable reduction in the prices of basic commodities exported by the continent. Furthermore, the continent has become increasingly marginalized in the course of world trade and the globalization process, which has further intensified its problems.

Africa is still the scene of armed conflicts, civil wars and natural disasters, all of which hinder its development efforts. In spite of the particular attention devoted by the Millennium Summit to the special needs of the continent, particularly the promotion of regional and subregional mechanisms for the prevention and settlement of conflicts, the establishment of peace and stability and other measures needed to face development challenges, there is still an acute need for the Organization to continue to accord the highest priority to Africa and for the international community to provide the necessary support for Africa's urgent needs, especially since the programme under consideration will be concluded in two years.

I should like in this regard to express our satisfaction at the fact that light has been shed on the urgent economic and social problems of Africa in the United Nations programme and in the several

conferences and important events that have taken place recently, in particular the two special meetings of the Security Council on HIV/AIDS and security in Africa, and other major United Nations conferences.

We believe that the United Nations strategy for the realization of sustainable development in Africa should focus on the following points.

First, reduction of poverty, which is the greatest challenge to Africa, and the elaboration of effective programmes to gradually eliminate it in that continent. Poverty leads to conflicts, and the reverse is also true. There is a need to mobilize all African resources, and all other resources provided by its partners, in order to realize that objective.

Second, a radical solution to the debt problem is needed, as Africa is one of the continents most affected by this problem, which hinders its economic progress. That could be achieved through the cancelling of African debt in order to achieve sustainable development.

Third, immediate measures must be taken to halt the spread of AIDS, which threatens security and political stability in the continent. We must devise a strategy to guarantee the distribution of medicines at reasonable prices and launch an information campaign that would concentrate on prevention.

Fourth, a solution must be found to the problems of desertification and drought in Africa, particularly in land-locked countries, and bilateral and multilateral assistance must be provided to the affected States in an effort to achieve water security in the continent.

Fifthly, necessary support must be provided to Africa so that it can manage its natural resources, strike a balance between population growth and economic growth, and study how to diversify its economies so that progress can be made in manufacturing African commodities.

Sixthly, priority must be given to the agricultural sector in order to develop the agricultural and rural areas, concentrating on the role of women in rural areas and on using modern techniques that are sustainable and that will help preserve the environment and provide food security. This in turn would lead to a reduction in the costs of importing foodstuffs.

Seventhly, Africa's share of global trade needs to be enhanced by means of fair and reasonable prices for its commodities. Africa should also be allowed to take its due position in the world and in the decision-making process in the economic and political fields.

During the last decade there were several United Nations conferences — from Rio to Cairo, from Copenhagen to Beijing — all of which reflected an international consensus on the need to support Africa and to meet its urgent development needs. Also in the last few years increasing attention has been paid to Africa by various international and regional entities. There were a series of conferences of the francophone countries, meetings in Tokyo, exchanges of views and the summit in Cairo last April — which for the first time included European and African leaders, who focused on promoting cooperation between the two continents. Finally, there was a ministerial meeting between the Chinese and the Africans in Beijing that dealt with activating cooperation between South-South countries and with the need for globalization to advance the interests of all nations and peoples.

If we truly wish to develop Africa, the great Powers should stop exploiting its wealth and resources at reduced prices and should cease interfering in the continent's internal affairs. If the international community has accepted the principle of compensation for some past crimes, why does it not require the colonial Powers to compensate the peoples and countries of Africa for committing the greatest crime in history — colonization and enslavement? The African people should be compensated for all the destruction and usurpation to which they were subjected during the colonial era.

This gloomy picture of Africa will gradually change. The new African generation is growing and becoming greater. It is showing a marked determination to make progress and develop. African leaders and experts continue their efforts, in spite of all the difficulties they are facing and in spite of all attempts to marginalize their continent. They are cooperating to solve their domestic problems and conflicts, to unite and regain their political and economic clout, to make their voices heard and to allow their continent to gain its rightful place on the new globalized map of the world.

Not a single day passes without an initiative for Africa. Two days ago my delegation hosted a small summit of the parties to the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Several heads of State of

neighbouring countries participated in this summit, which considered the various aspects of the problem, in an attempt to find an African solution to it.

In addition, last week Lusaka witnessed the establishment of the first free trade zone in Africa by the summit of the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA). The summit of Sahel and Saharan countries, which includes my country, continues its efforts to achieve cooperation and complementarity among North, Central and Western African nations.

Regional economic blocs in every part of the continent continue to progress, with the utmost determination, towards realizing their economic objectives. These efforts reaffirm Africa's resolve to establish economic blocs that will play an important role in the fields of trade, investment, sustainable development and complementarity, in accordance with the Abuja Agreement of 1991, which is striving to make the vision of the founders of the Organization of African Unity a reality.

Lastly, I would like to reaffirm the importance of the United Nations efforts in support of Africa's development programmes. We look forward to the Economic and Social Council playing a central role in this regard, particularly in this new millennium, and assisting in sparing Africa the disadvantages of globalization and enabling the continent to benefit from the new technology and the information revolution that globalization provides. The efforts of the United Nations and the international community will not succeed, however, without the necessary political will to provide adequate resources for the sustainable development of Africa.

Africa represents the greatest present challenge to the United Nations. As the Secretary-General has so eloquently stated, if the Organization does not succeed in improving the humanitarian, economic and social conditions of its people, this will be a political and moral failure, not only for the Organization, but also for the international community as a whole.

Mr. Sun (Republic of Korea): At the outset, I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his report on the implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s, which has taken stock of progress in its implementation, including, in particular, the mobilization of additional resources.

Despite positive signs of economic growth in some parts of Africa, the overall trends in Africa's economic development remain grim. Although worsening poverty and a widening digital divide, heavily influenced by globalization, are common in all developing countries, the situation in Africa is unique and most dire. For instance, per capita income is stagnating at around $700 dollars, and the global market share of African countries has remained at less than 2 per cent. Official development assistance (ODA) has been falling in both nominal and real terms, while the debt burden is worsening. To make matters worse, the HIV/AIDS pandemic is running rampant across the continent, and armed conflicts are prevailing in some parts of the region.

It is, in fact, a daunting challenge to reverse these trends. In this regard, I would like to draw delegates' attention to the commitments that the world's leaders made at the Millennium Summit for combating poverty and underdevelopment, in particular in Africa. In line with the firm commitments undertaken at the Summit, we must make our utmost efforts for the expeditious and successful implementation of the New Agenda.

In view of the fact that such challenges are complex and multifaceted, we must have a comprehensive and integrated approach to take care of the various dimensions with socio-economic, political and institutional ramifications. In this regard, I am confident that the United Nations is uniquely positioned to coordinate activities to meet the desperate needs of Africa and that it possesses a comparative advantage in dealing with global problems.

My delegation would like to highlight two main targets of our actions for implementing the New Agenda. First, there is a pressing need to end armed conflicts, which prevent Africa from achieving political, economic and social development. Conflicts bring with them destruction of life and property, and force substantial diversions to the defence and military sectors of scarce resources that could have been used to revamp the economies. In order to keep or create peace in Africa, the United Nations capability for conflict prevention, peaceful resolution of disputes, peacekeeping, post-conflict peace-building and reconstruction must be further strengthened. In this regard, my delegation welcomes the report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations and the report of the Open-ended Ad Hoc Working Group on the Causes

of Conflict and the Promotion of Durable Peace and Sustainable Development in Africa.

Secondly, new avenues need to be explored for mobilizing additional resources and promoting exports of African countries. So far the funds and programmes, as well as other agencies of the United Nations, have taken a number of initiatives in this area. However, it is discouraging to note the huge gap between the level of financial resources needed for development and the capital inflows available to meet these needs. In this regard, actions to bridge the widening gap need to be taken both by donors and recipients. The recipient countries must make their best efforts to enhance country ownership and absorptive capacity by promoting good governance and administrative reforms, while the donor community provides increasing financial resources to deserving countries in a predictable and timely manner.

Over the past several years African countries have made a great deal of effort towards export promotion and diversification, in close collaboration with the United Nations system and the donor community. However, Africa's share of the global market remains at less than 2 per cent. To facilitate access to the international markets of products from Africa, redressing the trade barriers alone is not sufficient; better arrangements need to be in place for enhancing financial and technical assistance to address supply side constraints by improving the quality of goods, upgrading infrastructure and promoting marketing and packing skills.

The Republic of Korea has made the utmost efforts for sharing its development experience with other developing countries, and with African countries in particular. In cooperation with the Office of the Special Coordinator for Africa and the Least Developed Countries, we hosted the Forum on Asia-Africa Cooperation in Export Promotion, held in Seoul in December 1998. As a follow-up to that Forum, my country invited over 40 African experts and offered a training programme for export promotion in July this year.

In the area of market access, we removed tariffs on 80 commodities of major export interest to least developed countries, effective from this year. To promote South-South cooperation in science and technology, my Government, in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Special Unit for Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries, hosted the Forum on South-South Cooperation in Science and Technology in February this year. The Republic of Korea has also increased the scale of ODA since its admission to the Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in 1996. The volume of ODA in 1999 amounts to over $300 million, and we expect it to increase in the years to come.

Finally, 2001 will be an important year for addressing the issues of development and poverty eradication, as the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, the high-level international and intergovernmental event on financing for development and the high-level dialogue on strengthening international economic cooperation are to be held. My delegation sincerely hopes that these events will make great strides in mobilizing political will and financial resources for the sustained development of developing countries, especially for the special needs of the African States.

Mr. Bautista (Philippines): At the outset, my delegation expresses its thanks to the Secretary-General for the report prepared for the Assembly's consideration of this agenda item on the implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s, including measures and recommendations agreed upon at its mid-term review.

I would like to focus on just a few matters of special interest to my delegation. My delegation notes the positive steps taken by Africa in building its capacity to support the process of regional integration, and notes in particular the efforts of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) in providing technical assistance to support the development of a regional economic community. In particular, we welcome the ECA's efforts to facilitate the formulation of African positions at the Seattle World Trade Organization Conference and the tenth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD X) in Bangkok.

As a founding member of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), the Philippines knows how difficult the process can be, and how much dedication and hard work are needed for meaningful progress towards regional integration. Indeed, we have a special appreciation of the challenges inherent in

integrating a region composed of countries with different historical experiences, at varying levels of economic development, and with differing levels of mutual comfort. We therefore believe that ASEAN can contribute to Africa's integration by sharing its experiences, particularly with regard to the critical first steps.

To this end, the Philippines has participated actively in the Asia-Africa Forum since it was established. We were particularly encouraged by the third Forum, held recently in Kuala Lumpur, in which we shared our experiences with regard to the agricultural sector and the private sector. We also look forward to a lively exchange of experiences at the forthcoming Fourth International Conference of New or Restored Democracies, to be held in Cotonou, Benin, next month.

My delegation believes that one of the reasons ASEAN has succeeded is because of our efforts to build confidence within the group through the ASEAN approach of resolving problems among ourselves, quietly but resolutely. We believe that a similar approach would help develop a climate conducive to economic growth and social development in Africa. In this regard, we particularly note the Secretary-General's recognition of the progress made in terms of democratization in the region and the encouraging performance of many African economies. Indeed, nothing helps to establish peace better than democracy and emerging prosperity.

While a more tranquil environment may be conducive to growth, my delegation is cognizant of the fact that, for many countries, the resources are simply not available for poverty alleviation projects. This is due to many factors, including insufficient capital inflows, an unmanageable debt burden and the simple lack of consumer-led consumption. My delegation therefore hopes that the enhanced Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Debt (HIPC) Initiative will succeed where its antecedent did not. We particularly hope that the Initiative will, among other things, take into account capacity to pay. We also voice the concern expressed by many that the enhanced HIPC will divert resources away from official development assistance (ODA), rather than complement it.

With regards to ODA, my delegation notes with disappointment that, while some developed countries have met the target of 0.7 per cent of gross national product devoted to ODA, most have not. We strongly encourage these countries to follow the example of the more generous developed nations. We do recognize that some of the motivations for ODA have shifted as a result of the end of the cold war and that many countries, including in Africa, are suffering from a decline in donor interest and the resulting lack of predictability in the flow of aid.

A shift in how aid is provided must therefore take place. This new approach should make aid more predictable and should take into account a country's state of underdevelopment. At the same time, recipient countries must bear the responsibility of ensuring that the necessary infrastructure is in place to ensure that the poorest and the most vulnerable truly benefit from this aid. My delegation therefore notes with interest the proposal in the addendum to the Secretary-General's report that aid commitments be institutionalized as mandatory obligations. While many will have obvious difficulties with this idea, it is an interesting point to ponder and a basis for what we hope will be fruitful future discussions.

My delegation also wishes to support the observation that the organizations of the United Nations system working in Africa should take a holistic approach. Coordination must therefore be enhanced among the United Nations system's organizations working in Africa. We also share the view that there is a need for harmonizing non-United Nations initiatives through the creation of linkages and the sharing of information.

Finally, I wish to highlight recent Philippine efforts to enhance our contribution to the development of Africa. This year, the Philippines initiated the establishment of diplomatic relations with African countries with which we had no formal relations. In particular, we signed the appropriate joint communiqués with the Republic of the Congo, the Republic of Cape Verde, the Republic of Togo and, just this week, the Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe. We hope to conclude the remaining joint communiqués in the very near future.

The Philippines has also espoused an active policy of pursuing a strong relationship with our brothers in the developing world within the umbrella of South-South cooperation, in both the economic and the technical fields. We look forward to concrete results from sharing, in particular, our experiences in capacity-

and institution-building through third-country training programmes, the sending of experts, exchanges of scholars and fellowships. Indeed, some of these activities are ongoing and are being coordinated by the Technical Cooperation Council of the Philippines.

We hope that, through our efforts to intensify our cooperation with Africa, the Philippines will make a difference in the international community's efforts to help that great continent along the path of development and prosperity.

Mr. Hussein (Ethiopia): At the outset, I wish to thank the Secretary-General for his progress report on the implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF). The report provides a solid analysis and concrete recommendations for actions at the national and global levels.

As stated in the report of the Secretary-General, a number of African countries have made substantial progress in putting the right macroeconomic policies in place. Similarly, considerable progress has been achieved in implementing the recommendations of the mid-term review in the promotion of the private sector and the intensification of the democratization process and the strengthening of civil society.

Notwithstanding these efforts, Africa's economic and social problems remain acute. Africa, despite its enormous resources, sadly still remains the world's poorest region. The continent's growth rate in 1990 was 3 per cent and 2.1 per cent for the entire decade of the 1990s. This figure is far below the 7 per cent per annum growth rate in the gross domestic product needed for Africa to meet the international target of reducing poverty by half by the year 2015.

Beyond growth and poverty reduction, Africa is facing a plethora of underdevelopment traps. The HIV/AIDS pandemic is ravaging Africa. AIDS killed 2 million people in Africa in 1998 alone, leaving millions of children orphaned. In the 1990s, the international economic environment, too, was not conducive to Africa's sustaining growth and making a dent in poverty. Official development assistance (ODA), which is the only dependable source of growth and development for many in Africa, continued to decline. ODA declined from $19.7 billion in 1992 to $9.7 billion in 1998. The unpredictability of such flows has contributed to macroeconomic instability and worsened the already fragile economy of African countries.

On the debt front, it is not just that the debt relief being provided is coming too late and too slow, but that the magnitude of assistance in debt relief is quite simply too little. Furthermore, the effectiveness of external transfer, be it in the form of aid or debt relief, has been undermined by the nature of the international delivery system. Aid management and coordination between donors and multilateral financial institutions without the active involvement of beneficiary countries have also undermined aid effectiveness in Africa.

Africa's share of international trade has also been declining. The share of trade as a source of foreign exchange and surplus for investment has been deteriorating since the early 1980s. The sector has been beset by three interrelated problems. These are increasing loss of the market share; the perennial volatility and fall in terms of trade; and unguarded trade liberalization, which has more than doubled the growth of imports to exports. All these factors lead to the worsening of the trade balance and the depletion of resources for investment. According to the report before us, it is estimated that terms-of-trade losses typically offset 70 per cent of official development assistance to Africa, or about 120 per cent of the average gross domestic product, for the period 1970-1997.

As we move forward, it is extremely important to take stock of our strengths and weaknesses that are observed in the implementation of UN-NADAF and take the necessary course of action. We have to implement fully — in spirit and in letter — the recommendations contained in the mid-term review of the New Agenda to resolve the decline of external resources, the debt overhang problem and the deterioration of terms of trade.

It is against this backdrop that we call on our development partners to provide substantial, unconditional and untied aid to Africa commensurate with its development needs. The provision of increased, predictable and effective development aid is pivotal for growth and sustainable development and poverty reduction. In addition, substantial reform is required to improve the aid delivery mechanism for greater effectiveness. As has been articulated in the Secretary-General's report on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable

development in Africa" (A/52/871), the principles of ownership, participation, partnership and decentralization need to be further developed to ensure that they are anchored in the recipients' socio-political process.

For Africa to effectively embark on the path of sustainable development, it is necessary for the international community to take fast, deep and broad debt relief initiatives, including outright debt cancellation. Full debt relief to the African countries represents a major resource transfer. Most of the recent economic analyses on the African debt recommend unconditional write-offs as the only realistic solution to the crisis.

We totally concur with the recommendation of the Secretary-General that Africa's development partners, besides providing official development assistance and debt relief, need to provide a package of incentives to encourage their firms to locate in Africa. Such incentives could also entail allowing exporters from Africa unconditional access to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development markets, free of duties. This strategy would have the highest pay-off in terms of transfer of real resources to African producers.

While we call on the international community to live up to the commitment it entered into 10 years ago, we are also fully cognizant that the development of Africa remains the responsibility of African countries. We need to strengthen the reform that we have started in order to create an enabling environment for growth and sustainable development. It is also incumbent on us to see to it that conflicts within and between States are quickly resolved, thus strengthening the climate for meaningful development.

Finally, it is our earnest hope that the final review and appraisal of the New Agenda scheduled for 2002 presents the international community with another opportunity to examine and reorient its approach to partnership with Africa and to come up with innovative strategies for its sustainable development. We believe the cornerstone of this partnership should be ownership by African countries of their own development plans and strategies.

Mr. Osio (Nigeria): I am speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China on agenda item 30, "Implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s". I would first of all like to congratulate the Secretary-General on a very enlightening progress report. We commend the report for study and full implementation.

It is worrisome that the development challenges that Africa faced in the 1990s have been carried over to the twenty-first century. Increasing that worry is the fact that these challenges have assumed a more complex and devastating character, calling for urgent and concrete action on the part of everyone if that important continent is not to slip further into misery. Whereas African countries grappled in the 1980s and 1990s with the problem of building modern States founded on democratic principles and a diversified economic base, they are, in addition, now confronted with the frightening spectre of total marginalization, even physical annihilation, in the aftermath of globalization and the HIV/AIDS pandemic ravaging the continent. The countries are in very dire need of the benefits of globalization.

Africa is in danger of being destroyed by HIV/AIDS. The figures contained in the Secretary-General's report regarding the victims of this scourge are indeed frightening: 24 million Africans are living with HIV/AIDS, representing 70 per cent of the world total; 14 million Africans are already dead from the disease; and in 1999 alone 4 million African adults were newly infected with the virus. The implications are obvious. Africa's adult and working population is being progressively depleted to the point that its socio-economic future hangs in the balance. This calls for urgent and serious action by Africa and its partners. In this regard, the HIV/AIDS summit, coming up in Abuja, Nigeria next year, deserves the support of all. With appropriate international support, the Abuja conference should mark a watershed in the international effort to stem the dangerous tide of HIV/AIDS in which humanity, especially Africa, is now inexorably being carried.

The nature and pace that globalization has assumed in the past few years is a source of serious concern for Africa. Africa's progressively decreasing ability to attract foreign direct investment and official development assistance — despite its huge potential — and generally mobilize external financial resources is directly attributable to the negative effects of globalization on the continent. Dwindling access to the world markets and its position on the wrong side of the digital divide further aggravate the continent's dismal situation. Indeed, that Africa's export revenues have

declined steadily in the last two decades — from 3.2 per cent of the world total in 1985 to 1.5 per cent in 1998 — is one serious cause for concern.

If the conventional markets were hard to penetrate, the emerging e-commerce and e-business market environments of the Internet and the World Wide Web are virtually out of the reach of most African countries. Africa needs the support and assistance of the international community to overcome what may be its biggest challenge yet in the development process in the early twenty-first century: entering the information and communication age. In this regard, the gesture of Japan at the Okinawa Group of Eight Summit in setting aside a fund to help developing countries to meet the challenges of information technology is commendable. When operationalized, that gesture is worthy of emulation.

The debt overhang probably constitutes the greatest impediment to development for many African countries. Many African countries have been weighed down for decades by a heavy debt burden. These countries continue to be hampered by the excruciating weight of debt and debt servicing obligations, which consume more than 33 per cent of annual revenues. Any initiative that seeks to promote the rapid development of the continent must therefore include a strategy for technology transfer and for alleviating the debt burden. Not only should the enhanced Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Debt Initiative be at once expanded to include many more countries, but the initiative should also be adequately funded and redesigned to achieve the desired objective of freeing the resources of these countries, especially in Africa, for development. In fact, debt cancellation for the world's poorest and indebted countries remains the most viable option.

We recognize that the New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s represents a veritable and viable blueprint for achieving the rapid socio-economic development of the continent, even in the new century. The strategies for effective mobilization of external and domestic resources, the promotion and invigoration of the private sector and the intensification of the democratic process are all on target in this regard. In addition, a quick and effective resolution of the debt problem and increased market access and better pricing for African commodities would go a long way in contributing to Africa's efforts for and dream of economic revival and renaissance in the twenty-first century.

Furthermore, African countries would make their own efforts at industrialization and diversification of their economic base, thereby intensifying agricultural production, while following the path of sustainable development, preferably in concert with regional partners. But these would be feasible only if Africa paid due attention to the development of its human resource base by providing appropriate education, health care and infrastructure, as well as ensuring the full participation of all segments of society in the task of nation-building. These are very evident in the recommendations contained in the mid-term review of the New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s. But adequate funds are needed to implement and attain these noble objectives.

It is sad that no single country, let alone a whole continent like Africa, can survive on a diet of good recommendations or promises alone. Action, only productive and gainful action, on the recommendations now placed before us can bring about the desired socio-economic growth and development of Africa and its people. The Group of 77 and China are therefore happy to note that Africa, with its huge potential for development and prosperity, is not without friends.

Let me conclude by stating again our appreciation for the good work being undertaken under the United Nations initiative. We can assure the Assembly that the Group of 77 and China are prepared to work assiduously, nationally and in collaboration with the United Nations system and all our partners, for the actualization of the laudable objectives of the New Agenda for the Development of Africa. We count on the support and cooperation of all, in the new and invigorated spirit of globalization and the common destiny of humankind.

Mr. Effah-Apenteng (Ghana): Africa has demonstrated its commitment and determination to bring opportunity and progress to its peoples. Since the mid-1980s many countries on the continent have made important strides, reforming their economies, improving macroeconomic management, liberalizing markets and trade and making the private sector the engine of growth.

Despite the outbreak of conflicts and natural disasters in parts of the continent, Africa made gains in the 1990s, with rising incomes and exports and, in

some cases, with decreases in severe poverty. Political reforms have led to participatory governance and expanded the horizons of civil liberties.

The progress achieved so far has, however, not been enough to overcome the enormous development challenges facing the continent. While 5 per cent annual growth is needed just to keep the number of the poor from rising, African economies grew by only 3 per cent in 1999, a marginal increase over 1998. Gross domestic product (GDP) growth in 2000 is only expected to increase to 4.2 per cent. The annual growth of 7 per cent estimated to lead to halving poverty by 2015 appears remote, with only three countries attaining that rate in 1999. Average income per capita is lower than at the end of the 1960s.

The Secretary-General's progress report on this agenda item points to other problems: declining export shares in traditional primary products and terms of trade losses which offset concessional loans and grants. Africa's share in global foreign direct investment inflows remained at the low level of 1.2 per cent in 1999, compared with 2.3 per cent in 1997 and 1.2 per cent in 1998. It is clear that, eight years since the adoption of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF), the challenge of Africa's development requires even bolder commitment and action.

Only last week my delegation noted in the debate on the report of the Open-ended Ad Hoc Working Group on the Causes of Conflict and the Promotion of Durable Peace and Sustainable Development in Africa the failure of the international community to implement policies on market access, debt relief, international financial flows and official development assistance (ODA) needed to leverage Africa's own efforts to achieve sustained growth and development. The Secretary-General's report on the mobilization of additional resources for African development reinforces this point.

We therefore welcome this opportunity to assess the impact of the New Agenda, a compact between Africa and the international community. We believe that such an assessment would set the stage for the evaluation of the New Agenda in 2002 and help map out the way forward. We anxiously look forward to the evaluation.

There are several initiatives on Africa, along with other events also focusing on Africa, planned for the coming year. While this proliferation may give the mistaken impression of progress, we believe that the benefits from all the initiatives on Africa will come from our ability to consider them within a holistic framework. In this regard, consideration of the implementation of UN-NADAF must take into account all the other relevant processes, such as the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, the special session of the General Assembly on HIV/AIDS and the High-level International Intergovernmental Event on Financing for Development.

As important as the review process is, Africa cannot wait until 2002 for the outstanding issues critical to its development to be addressed. The Secretary-General's report, as well as reports by other major international institutions, provide adequate input for effective and immediate action. In this regard, we appreciate the efforts of both bilateral and multilateral partners in the context of Africa's development. We regret, however, that the contributions of some of our partners have yet to match their potential or expressed commitment.

In this connection, we reiterate the proposals that have been made by our delegation, among others, for a real commitment to write off Africa's debt and reach agreement on market access for products of critical interest to African countries in a coherent manner to ensure conditions for Africa's growth and development. This means putting priority on resolving, within the shortest possible time, trade issues over agriculture, textiles and leather outside the framework of the comprehensive round of trade negotiations being canvassed.

We also urge the major industrial countries to consider providing additional capital to the World Bank, as well as their national institutions, to expand the possibilities for export credit and investment guarantee schemes in leveraging private capital to Africa, especially to sectors with greater forward and backward linkages.

Official development assistance (ODA) remains a major catalyst for the attraction of private capital flows. It is also an essential source of funding for the capacity-building needed in Africa to enable the continent to take advantage of the opportunities created by globalization. Therefore, the decline of ODA to Africa is a matter of great concern. We must reconsider

the basis of the changing motivation for development assistance, as well as the need for a coordinated approach to ODA that maximizes its impact. Linking ODA to conditionality poses grave problems for our efforts to eradicate poverty, particularly our commitment to the most vulnerable segments of our societies.

It is important to underscore the need to focus attention on the pervasive capital flight from Africa. Africa must, in cooperation with the relevant international bodies, design policy frameworks to ensure stability that encourages the retention of foreign currency on the continent. It is clear, however, that other forms of net transfer of resources abroad are also harmful to Africa's economy. In this respect, measures should be taken to reverse the net resource transfer abroad that sometimes results from the implementation of aid programmes.

The diverse initiatives which have been undertaken at the bilateral and multilateral levels must feed into the larger framework of the New Agenda. Our goal must be to seek interlinkages, coherence and comprehensiveness to ensure that the solutions meet the challenges and that they create the critical mass envisaged in the Secretary-General's report.

We recognize the work being done by the United Nations system to assist the efforts of African countries in education, health, governance, information technology, population and South-South cooperation, among others. Their sustained efforts to deepen the focus on Africa is commendable, and we encourage them to continue building on their partnerships, including with the World Bank and others, to increase the impact of their activities. We urge all countries in a position to do so to increase their contributions to the funds and programmes to enable them to achieve their objectives in programme countries.

Ultimately, no one can change the fate of Africa except Africans themselves. We still need to pursue with urgency the outstanding work in the process of economic and political reforms. Our commitment to zero tolerance for unconstitutional changes in government and for civil conflict must be demonstrated through proactive support for and encouragement of good governance.

Every day that each of us, as partners and owners of Africa's development, fails to take the bold but right decisions for Africa's development, we add to the magnitude of the continent's development challenge. We must resolve to use the process of the UN-NADAF review to change the dynamic of Africa's development agenda in order to launch Africa on a truly sustainable course of progress.

Mr. Belinga-Eboutou (Cameroon) (*spoke in French*): At its forty-sixth session, the General Assembly decided to make Africa one of its priorities for the 1990s, or even its top priority. In this context, it unanimously adopted the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF). This New Agenda, which represented a real contract of solidarity between the international community and Africa, defined the commitments and the responsibilities of both parties.

In two years we will celebrate the tenth anniversary of the New Agenda. Is not this a good time to ask ourselves what has become of these commitments? Has the Agenda become just one more of the many unimplemented declarations? These questions need to be asked because of the dwindling interest in the debate on Africa, specifically the debate on the New Agenda for its development in the 1990s.

My delegation was very interested in the Secretary-General's mid-term report on the implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s.

Naturally, my country welcomes the efforts made by the international community to provide the African continent with additional financial resources to enable it to improve the standard of living of its people and to combat poverty.

Cameroon recognizes the important role played by Governments, the United Nations agencies and organs and the other partners in promoting a number of projects involving the private sector, intensifying the democratization process and strengthening civil society.

For their part, the vast majority of African countries have taken steps to ensure far-reaching economic reforms within sectoral and structural frameworks agreed during the mid-term review. Many countries have had encouraging results, sometimes, if not always, at the cost of enormous sacrifices.

However, today we note, as emphasized in the report of the Secretary-General, that the objectives set in the New Agenda in terms of mobilizing external

resources have not been achieved. In fact, official development assistance to Africa has declined, from $19.7 billion in 1992 to $9.7 billion in 1998. As for foreign direct investment, it is being diverted from Africa despite the incentives put in place by African countries and despite the continent's great potential. Meanwhile, Africa's external debt burden, estimated at $350 billion, has continued to grow in spite of debt-relief measures intended to lighten it adopted in the context of the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Debt Initiative.

It is clear from these observations that the New Agenda has not met our expectations. Let us recall that the United Nations New Agenda was intended to be a catalyst, a political engine that would drive all African development activities within and outside the continent. In that regard, initiatives to promote the development of Africa should encourage the implementation of the Agenda and should avoid the overlapping that has a negative impact on the implementation of agreed measures. In the view of my delegation, implementation has been impaired by insufficient political will, insufficient coordination and insufficient coherence. This has resulted in a diffusion of energies, a decline in the level of activities, inadequate mobilization of resources, and the inefficient use of existing resources. Corrective measures must therefore be taken if we wish to lend fresh momentum to the implementation of UN-NADAF, an Agenda that had given rise to such high hopes.

Here, we think the recommendations made by the Committee on Programme and Coordination at its thirty-eighth through fortieth sessions are of particular interest; they could be extremely useful. It is significant that, in preparing his report, the Secretary-General drew on those recommendations of the Committee on Programme and Coordination.

Let me recall some of what we see as the key recommendations. With a view to avoiding wasteful overlapping among the various United Nations programmes for Africa, the Committee on Programme and Coordination identified the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa as an implementing arm of the New Agenda. The Committee also strongly advocated the implementation of a strategic master plan setting out the directions to be taken by various partners, identifying goals, defining evaluation mechanisms and providing for the sharing of responsibilities among the various actors.

The Secretariat was to play the role of advocate-general for Africa by continuing to mobilize international public opinion in favour of the cause of African development. The Office of the Special Coordinator for Africa and the Least Developed Countries was to monitor closely the implementation of UN-NADAF and, when necessary, to sound the alarm. Finally, the United Nations Development Programme and the Economic Commission for Africa were to design specific operational activities.

Have that concept and that division labour, approved by the General Assembly, been respected? There is every reason to doubt it. Certainly, the haziness resulting from such non-respect seems to have a great deal to do with the deplorable lack of progress to date towards implementation of the Agenda.

Finally, the Committee on Programme and Coordination advocated an independent evaluation of the programme that, at the time of the final review and appraisal scheduled for 2002, would make it possible objectively to measure the quantity and quality of resources and programmes, along with their real impact on the sustainable development of Africa. We are pleased that the Economic and Social Council acted on that recommendation: at its 1999 substantive session, the Council declared that following the 2002 final review it would task independent experts with evaluating the implementation of the Agenda. Here, we agree with the Committee on Programme and Coordination that for such an evaluation to be objective, its terms of reference must be defined in advance.

My delegation makes these observations in the light of the momentum generated for the New Agenda at the Millennium Summit, during which the international community decided that Africa remained its top priority. The Millennium Declaration (resolution 55/2), which confirmed that priority, reiterated the determination of heads of State or Government and of States Members of the United Nations to stand firmly by Africa in its struggle to attain lasting peace and sustainable development. Africa, which is facing so many old and new problems — with the new ones amounting to a pandemic — expects a great deal from the concrete manifestations of this renewed solidarity.

As I approach the end of my remarks, I would recall the appeal for Africa that Pope John Paul II made at Yaoundé:

> "Africa is a continent in which countless human beings — men, women, children and young people — have in a sense been left by the wayside, ill, wounded, powerless, marginalized and abandoned. They have a crying need for good Samaritans who will come to their assistance".

These concerns, as expressed in the words of the Holy Father, are the same as those expressed in the Millennium Declaration, particularly in the paragraph relating to solidarity. May the commitments made by heads of State or Government at the Millennium Summit give rise to a real response to this appeal from Africa — the continent of the future. We have said this before, and we repeat it today: Africa will remember.

Mr. Hønningstad (Norway): I would like to thank the Secretary-General for the considerable effort that has gone into the report before us. The activities and initiatives presented in the report show an admirable scope and diversity. It gives an interesting, although not altogether encouraging, picture of the situation in Africa. In spite of the continent's natural resources, Africa scores lower on key development criteria — notably, economic growth — than other regions of the world. Of course, the reasons for the slow development do not lie only with Africa. The debt burden is excessive, official development assistance flows are too low, trade obstacles to Africa's exports are considerable and the digital divide is getting wider. While the world is richer than ever before, the North-South gap continues to widen.

In this context I would like to touch upon one of the most urgent challenges facing the African States. Poverty reduction is crucial in terms of economic development, political stability and regional and global security, and economic development is fundamental to achieving poverty reduction. We therefore believe that the international trend of reduced disbursements of development assistance must be reversed. My Government is currently working on a plan to increase Norway's development assistance to 1 per cent of gross domestic product. Special emphasis will be placed on increased cooperation with our African partners.

However, neither bilateral assistance nor multilateral arrangements can assume the responsibility that rests at the national level, nor would that be desirable. The main responsibility for development strategies leading to sustained progress rests, therefore, with Africa. It is African countries themselves that must show leadership to generate economic growth.

Development strategies will best succeed when implemented in a stable political environment and aimed at both economic and social progress, including health, education and gender equality issues. Accountable democratic Governments and the rule of law are vital elements in any development process.

Since the beginning of the 1990s we have seen many African States opt for economic and political reform. Unfortunately, we have also seen the outbreak of new wars and, in several countries, continuing civil strife, dashing our hopes for a more peaceful future for Africa. This turn of events may threaten the stability and future prospects of large parts of the continent.

The report rightly emphasizes the responsibility of African countries for positive developments in Africa. Increasing African capacity with regard to peacekeeping operations and conflict prevention will contribute to the stability of the continent. The role of the international community should primarily be to strengthen and support efforts and initiatives taken by the African countries themselves. This is part of our global responsibility, and we look forward to such cooperation with our African partners.

In many African countries, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, the AIDS pandemic is ravaging whole communities. We agree with the observation in the report that without a renewed effort in many countries the AIDS pandemic may erode all the progress that has been made since political independence. The International Partnership against AIDS in Africa should be highlighted here, as a new and innovative initiative to turn this tragic situation around. We also recall the important debate in the Security Council in January on the impact of HIV/AIDS on peace and security in Africa, and the follow-up meeting in the Economic and Social Council in February.

I should like to point out that Norway's programmes for development cooperation with our African partners have increasingly addressed questions of governance, democracy-building and human rights — factors which are crucial in order to prevent conflicts from erupting. We fully endorse the report's recommendation that African countries should pay attention to ensuring accountability, transparency and

the rule of law in their efforts to improve governance and increase the involvement of civil society. My Government will continue to support programmes and institutions that pay heed to these guiding principles, which constitute the basis of sustainable development.

In conclusion, I should like to recall part VII of the Millennium Declaration, entitled "Meeting the special needs of Africa", which in our view constitutes more than a blueprint for sustainable development on the African continent. It is an obligation for the world community, in particular the donor countries, to support Africa in its struggle to achieve sustainable development in all sectors and to bring Africa into the mainstream of the world economy.

Mr. Mostafa Chowdhury (Bangladesh): The international community has been making efforts to bring the special needs of Africa to the forefront of the global development agenda for some time. At long last we are openly discussing, in different global forums, issues of African development. Many measures are being suggested; many commitments — although they are far from adequate — have also been made. But, sadly, our actions are not keeping pace with our words — indeed, they are lagging far behind.

The development problems of Africa, the home of 33 out of the 48 least developed countries, have now been widely recognized. The Secretary-General's report, in the addendum, describes the resource issues in some detail. I will refer briefly to some of the facts.

The overall flow of official development assistance (ODA) has continued to diminish globally; Africa has not been spared. There has been a 24 per cent yearly reduction since 1990; ODA declined from $19.7 billion in 1992 to $9.7 billion in 1998. This is hurting the African countries most of all, as they have little opportunity to mobilize sufficient domestic resources to undertake vital projects like the building of infrastructure and telecommunication networks. These are among the essential preconditions for attracting foreign investment. Aggregate resource flows to Africa declined from $26 billion in 1997 to $17.1 billion in 1998, a staggering reduction in a one-year period.

Africa's debt burden is increasing, despite the various well publicized measures taken to reduce the debt overhang. Debt service as a percentage of exports was 30 per cent in 1999, compared with 21.3 per cent in 1997. Indeed, it is difficult to discern what significant improvements the current initiatives have made.

Africa's loss of global market share for the period 1970-1997 amounted to $68 billion. That stands in stark contrast to the sharp increase in the volume of global trade. There has been an increasing loss in market share for Africa's traditional exports.

The world has agreed to reduce absolute poverty by half by the year 2015. To achieve this target, a minimum growth rate of 7 per cent, continued for the next 15 years, has to be ensured. In fact, average growth in the last decade was a mere 2.1 per cent.

Per capita income in 1998 slipped to $668, compared to $749 in 1980. This has give rise to an increase in the number of people living in poverty, rather than a reduction.

These are but a few examples of the deterioration of the development scenario in Africa and the diminishing inflow of resources in a region where the need for increased international support is widely recognized. In the last decade, the world has seen a tremendous increase in international trade and in the accumulation of global wealth. Although this has been mostly concentrated in the industrialized world, some developing countries have registered notable success; many others also shared a spin-off benefit. But Africa has been left out.

African countries, like other developing nations, have been fighting to overcome underdevelopment. However, their task has been especially difficult, as a number of complicating factors, on a magnified scale, are holding back the progress they otherwise could achieve.

Poverty is pervasive in Africa, with a high concentration of people living in conditions of absolute poverty in many of the sub-Saharan countries, which makes it extremely difficult to mobilize domestic resources. The HIV/AIDS epidemic is especially acute in Africa, robbing it of the vitality of the younger generation. Millions of adults are dying or becoming debilitated. Millions of children are being orphaned and face an uncertain future with little hope. The health-care system is overwhelmed and cannot deal with the many public health threats, such as the scourge of malaria and tuberculosis.

The major global conferences of the 1990s set out guidelines on how to fight underdevelopment and

poverty. Most countries have chalked out their own national programmes of action to put the agreed principles to work. It is ironic, however, that at a time when national machinery is poised to deliver a much greater output for any unit of investment, international support and assistance are drying up. It is also unfortunate that we are not coming up with bold initiatives to join forces with Africa in the fight against the root causes of underdevelopment.

African countries are bravely fighting against many odds. There are many factors, however, which are beyond their individual efforts. The international community should be much more forthcoming, in a spirit of genuine partnership and support, in Africa's struggle to break out of the vicious circle of underdevelopment and poverty. There is an urgent and desperate need to combine our individual efforts to lend support to Africa, and we have a moral obligation to do so.

Mr. Aboulgheit (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): African countries made tremendous efforts to reform and improve their domestic, economic, political and social environments during the 1990s, and in so doing encountered major obstacles and difficulties. Those efforts, as is noted in the report (A/55/350) of the Secretary-General, have led to progress in the fields addressed by the mid-term review in 1995, namely consolidating the process of economic adjustments and reform, encouraging the private sector and enhancing democracy and civil society.

The reform and development of any society is primarily the responsibility of that society. However, several major obstacles are impeding the efforts of most African countries to overcome the challenges of poverty and disease and to open up prospects for development. Foremost among those obstacles are rapid developments in the international economic environment and the failure by the international community, despite several initiatives to that end, to create a suitable mechanism to integrate the African countries, in particular the least developed ones, into the international economy.

International economic crises, turmoil and upheavals that occurred towards the end of the 1990s underscored the urgent need for internal reform among the developing nations in order to adapt to the new international realities. At the same time, they reflected the presence of certain shortcomings in the framework of international trade and financial institutions, which should be decisively redressed.

In this context, I wish to state frankly that most of the solutions offered to the developing nations tend to emphasize the internal, domestic dimension while largely ignoring the negative impact of imbalances in the system of international trade and finance. The speedy pace of globalization, which has given rise to rapid movement in capital markets and to strong competition, has led to practices that tend to restrict trade. These practices, which include anti-dumping policies and the application of rigid, inflexible sanitary and environmental measures and standards, are being misused in order to restrict the exports of the developing nations to the developed countries. This has led to major economic losses for the developing nations in general and the African countries in particular.

In addition, there has been a continued decline in official development assistance, to the extent that the internationally agreed target of 0.7 per cent of gross national product has become almost impossible to achieve, in view of the poor performance of most donor countries in this respect. There is no sign that this objective will be attained any time soon, even though official development assistance remains the main source of financing for development in most African countries.

Furthermore, Africa's share of foreign direct investment does not exceed 6 per cent of total investments geared to the developing countries, and the AIDS pandemic is ravaging the continent, killing millions annually and threatening economic and social stability in several countries of the continent. This is by any standard a truly tragic situation.

Efforts at social, political and economic reform by the African countries remain a sine qua non for the realization of their aspirations to development and progress. However, those efforts should be accompanied by a serious international undertaking to enable the African countries to continue their march towards development, through the opening of markets to the products of those countries and by increasing official development assistance, as we have already mentioned.

In this context, I wish to underline the need for the forthcoming Conference on the Least Developed Countries, to be held in Brussels next May, and the

High-level International Intergovernmental Event on Financing for Development to deal seriously and realistically with the needs of the African countries and to redress the imbalances in the present international trade and financial systems, with a view to creating an external environment conducive to helping those countries achieve sustainable development.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

I would like to inform members that a draft resolution on this item will be submitted at a later date.

Programme of work

The President: I should like to inform members that document A/INF/55/3/Add.3 contains a revised programme of work and schedule of plenary meetings of the General Assembly for the remainder of November 2000. It had been circulated to delegations this morning and is also available at the documents distribution centre in the General Assembly Hall.

Before adjourning the meeting, I would like to inform members that the remaining two items on the agenda for this morning — namely agenda item 44, "Global implications of the year 2000 date conversion problem of computers", and agenda item 180, "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Economic Community of Central African States," will be taken up this afternoon at 3 p.m.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.